

plebiscite for the freedom of the Sikh Nation," he said. "India should also allow self-determination in Christian Nagaland, Kashmir, Assam, and the other nations fighting for freedom to bring peace to South Asia."

"As Professor Darshan Singh, a former Jathedar of the Akal Takht, said, 'If a Sikh is not for Khalistan, he is not a Sikh,'" Dr. Aulakh noted. "We must continue to press for our God-given birthright of freedom," he said. "Without political power, religions cannot flourish and nations perish."

HONORING ESTHER MEDINA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE MEXICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY SERVICES AGENCY, INC

### HON. ZOE LOFGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 24, 2004*

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to acknowledge the great contributions of Esther Medina, the executive director of the Mexican American Community Services Agency, Inc. (MACSA). Founded in 1964, MACSA has established itself as the leader in the Latino community in the area of advocacy, social justice, youth/family/senior services, implementation and operation of two charter schools and the development of affordable housing.

Esther Medina was hired as the executive director of MACSA in 1982. At that time, MACSA was on the verge of losing funding from the United Way and was put on a 3-month corrective action plan to prove fiscal solvency, stable management and leadership. At that time, the finances were in such disarray, MACSA had no money in its budget to operate. Esther was able to convince the United Way to allocate \$27,000 to keep its doors open for 3 more months. Through Esther's efforts, she transformed MACSA from an organization with 1 full-time and 1 part-time employee, on the verge of having its doors closed forever, to an organization with 120 employees and an annual operating budget of over seven million dollars as well as developing and owning its current headquarter building, 2 acclaimed affordable housing projects for seniors, a full service 25,000 square foot multi-service youth center, a youth/teen intervention center, and 2 public charter high schools.

Esther Medina exemplifies the characteristics of a competent leader by being true to her values as a human being. The astounding success of MACSA is clearly attributable to her outstanding leadership.

IN LASTING MEMORY OF THOMAS MCRAE

### HON. MIKE ROSS

OF ARKANSAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 24, 2004*

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to rise in honor of the life and legacy of Thomas McRae III. He was a loving father and husband, a statesman, a leader, a public servant, and a tireless advocate of helping the less fortunate. He recently passed away at the age of 65 at his family's home in Arkadelphia.

Tom McRae, who was deeply rooted in an affluent Arkansas political family, graduated from El Dorado High School in 1956, and went on to earn a History degree from the University of Arkansas and a law degree from the University of Arkansas Law School. Upon graduation, he volunteered to go to Nepal with the Peace Corps in 1964, a 2-year experience that would give him a new perspective on society and allow him to perform extensive social work on behalf of Nepalese villagers and farmers.

Tom became a household name in 1990 when he ran in the Democratic primaries against Governor Bill Clinton in the face of overwhelming odds. He finished a strong second in a field of six, proving that odds are no detriment to a steadfast spirit and determination to fight for the causes and ideals in which you believe. It was a fight he would continue years later by directing nonprofit programs in Mississippi and Kentucky, helping the rural poor get loans and find jobs.

Throughout his life, Tom distinguished himself through a sustained commitment to his ideals and his community. He devoted himself to uplifting society by helping those less fortunate. His character is an example of the values we, as parents, teachers, community members, and legislators, hope to instill in our next generation. Bill Clinton spoke for many of us when he said, "I respected, admired and liked Tom McRae, and I will be forever grateful for the lifetime of service he gave to Arkansas."

I extend my deepest sympathies to his wife, Christine, his children, Catherine and Thomas, as well as all of those who knew and loved him. Although he may no longer be with us, his spirit and his legacy live on in the examples he set and the many lives he touched.

TRIBUTE TO MARJORIE CLEMENT

### HON. SCOTT MCINNIS

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 24, 2004*

Mr. MCINNIS. Mr. Speaker, it is with profound sadness that I rise before you to recognize Marjorie Clement of Jefferson County, Colorado, who recently passed away at the age of 81. She was a stellar public servant who will be missed by many, and I think it appropriate that we remember her life before this body of Congress and this Nation today.

Marjorie was appointed Jefferson County Commissioner in 1981, and was elected to serve for two additional terms. An ardent supporter of preserving Colorado's open spaces, Marjorie worked tirelessly to preserve some of Colorado's most beautiful landscapes and vistas. Marjorie became the second woman elected to the Jefferson County Board of County Commissioners, and will be remembered as a great defender of the citizens in her community. In addition to her elected office, Marjorie also contributed to her community as a member of the Jefferson County Historical Commission and the Jefferson County Historical Society. Marjorie was an avid outdoorswoman, enjoying horseback riding, tennis, and skiing. She is survived by a daughter, Elizabeth Graham, a son, Lawrence Clement, five grandchildren, and a great-granddaughter.

Mr. Speaker, it is an honor to rise before this body of Congress and this Nation to pay tribute to the life of Marjorie Clement. Marjorie was a beloved woman who made a tremendous impact on her community through her many selfless years in public service. The Jefferson County community and the State of Colorado will truly miss her, and my thoughts go out to Marjorie's loved ones during this difficult time of bereavement.

COUNCIL OF KHALISTAN URGES SIKH ORGANIZATIONS TO TAKE STRONG STAND FOR FREEDOM

### HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 24, 2004*

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, recently, the French National Assembly enacted a law banning religious symbols such as "conspicuous crosses," yarmulkes, Muslim headscarves, and Sikh turbans from schools. Many religious organizations spoke out against it, including many Sikh organizations. Belgium is thinking about such a law also.

The Council of Khalistan wrote a letter on February 11 noting that none of the other Sikh organizations mentioned the persecution of Sikhs in India or their struggle for freedom in their communications about this law. Yet a free and sovereign Sikh homeland, Khalistan, would have put the Sikhs in a much stronger position to protest these discriminatory and unfair rules.

The letter, brought to me by Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, the tireless fighter for freedom in South Asia, calls on Sikh organizations to stand up to the repression by working for freedom for the Sikh people.

In my years of public service, I have had the privilege of knowing many Sikhs. They are hardworking people and they are very supportive of the cause of freedom. Yet the Indian government's response is to step up the repression in the name of Hindutva—total Hindu domination of every facet of life in the subcontinent. An Indian Cabinet minister even said that everyone who lives in India must either be a Hindu or be subservient to Hindus.

Over a quarter of a million Sikhs have been killed by the Indian government in the last 20 years, Mr. Speaker. More than 52,000 are political prisoners. Even one political prisoner is unacceptable, Mr. Speaker. Even one government murder is unacceptable, especially when no one is punished for it and especially when the country where it happens proudly proclaims its commitment to democratic values.

Over 200 years ago, Americans fought to achieve our independence from an overbearing British monarchy. Today, the Sikhs fight for their freedom by peaceful means, which the Indian government falsely describes as terrorist. We are the beacon of hope for the freedom-loving people of the world, Mr. Speaker. We owe it to them and to ourselves to help them if we can.

One way to help is to stop aid to India as long as these egregious human rights violations continue. Everyone is entitled to live in peace and freedom, to go to work and enjoy life with the family and friends. Yet minorities in India are unable to do that because militant Hindus aligned with the RSS, the parent organization of the ruling party, and the government itself in many cases commit terrible acts